Stephen Minshall,
WA6VCR
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Dear Sirs,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on proceeding 05-235. I have
been a licensed Amateur Radio Operator for more than 30 years. I have seen
many changes in the structure of our licensing since I received my first
license. It is my belief that removing the Morse code requirement from the
Amateur Radio licensing procedure will be detrimental to the Amateur
Radios Service.

When I originally set out to gain my Amateur Radio License I found the
Morse Code requirement to be a major stumbling block for me. I struggled to
learn it well enough to pass the test. I did not pick up this skill as easily as
most of my friends at the time and it was frustrating but I worked hard at it
and eventually was able to pass the tests. I still struggle with Morse code to
this day. The reason I tell you this is that despite the difficulty I have had
with it I still believe that the Morse Code should not be eliminated from
Amateur Radio licensing requirements.

The radio spectrum is a limited resource that needs to be respected and
protected. The Morse Code requirements are an appropriate test of a persons
willingness to conform to the disciplines of Amateur Radio communications.
This may seem to be a harsh statement but it is no different than having to
make it through boot camp or a military academy to become a member of the
armed services. The amateur radio spectrum is far too great a resource to
allow but the most dedicated to have access to.

The Amateur Radio Service is often called upon in time of disaster. We
cannot allow any further deterioration of the quality of communications in
the spectrum. If this were merely a hobby there would not be cause to protect
the airwaves but the Amateur Radio Service is so much more than a hobby.
People's lives are at stake! Please consider the role that the Morse Code
requirement has played in keeping our cherished spectrum orderly.

Morse code provides for the most basic of equipment, the ability to use low
power levels, and the ability to get communications through in the worst of
conditions. It is important that we keep a number of people trained in the art
of Morse Code, it is good for the safety and welfare of our country.

Where else will anyone be trained in Morse Code. The Boy Scouts? Not any
more. The military? Not any more. Merchant shipping? Not any more.

Without the Morse Code requirement for licensing the Code will surely, eventually, die. Peoples lives have been saved by the Code. Prisoners have gotten their messages out of country by the Code. Someone has to take responsibility so that the Morse Code will not die.

The fate of our spectrum and the fate of Morse Code itself is now left in the last bastion of hope, the FCC. As fewer and fewer people know the Code there will be more and more opportunities to use it missed when emergencies call and people will un-necessarily die because of it. The numbers may be small but there is no doubt that some will die for the lack of a way to communicate with a flashlight, sweeping of the floor, or blinking eyelids. How many will die when a voice transmission won't get through when a Morse Code transmission would have? Why is it so important to get rid of the last Morse Code requirement? What is so wrong about keeping the Morse Code requirement?

To the honorable members of the Federal Communications Commission: Please protect our spectrum. Please protect the code. Please do what is right for our country.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Minshall,
WA6VCR